

SHIRLEY SCOTT

PRESTIGE 7163/SCOTTIE PLAYS THE DUKE



PRESTIGE

PRESTIGE RECORDS, Inc., 203 South Washington Ave., Bergenfield, N.J.

**SCOTTIE PLAYS THE DUKE
SHIRLEY SCOTT**

PRLP 7163 A

HIGH FIDELITY

1. CARAVAN
(Tizel & Ellington)
2. JUST SQUEEZE ME
(Duke Ellington)
3. C-JAM BLUES
(Duke Ellington)
4. PRELUDE TO A KISS
(Duke Ellington)

LONG PLAYING MICROGROOVE

PRESTIGE

PRESTIGE RECORDS, Inc., 203 South Washington Ave., Bergenfield, N.J.

**SCOTTIE PLAYS THE DUKE
SHIRLEY SCOTT**

PRLP 7163 B

HI FIDELITY

1. IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD
(Duke Ellington)
2. IN A MELLOW TONE
(Duke Ellington)
3. I'VE GOT IT BAD
(Ellington & Webster)
4. JUST A-SITTIN' AND A-ROCKIN'
(Ellington, Strayhorn, Gaines)

LONG PLAYING MICROGROOVE

SCOTTIE PLAYS THE DUKE

SHIRLEY SCOTT

SHIRLEY SCOTT, organ and piano
 GEORGE DUVIVIER, bass
 ARTHUR EDGEBILL, drums

- Side A
 1. CARAVAN
 2. JUST SQUEEZE IN
 3. C JAM BLUES
 4. PRELUDE TO A KISS

- Side B
 1. IN A SENTIMENTAL MOOD
 2. IN A MELLOW TONE
 3. I'VE GOT IT BAD
 4. JUST A-SITTIN' AND A-ROCKIN'

If you were to thumb back through the pages of jazz history you would be certain to find that of the musicians who achieved a status of greatness, each one had one thing in common; originality. It is not the only attribute necessary, but it is by far the most important. Without it the musician is relegated to mediocrity. For whatever jazz is, its most inherent ingredient is original thought.

The organ is one of the most difficult jazz instruments on which to obtain a personal identity. As Eddie Davis explained it, "To most people the organ sounds the same regardless of who plays it." He continues by stating, "I believe that one reason Scottie has suddenly become a favorite among jazz fans, is that after three or four years of explorations she has finally come up with a style that is all of her own."

Shirley Scott is not only original, she has reached a point in her career where she has achieved another necessary step towards greatness, that of having an identifiable sound on her instrument. It is doubtful that anyone hearing Scottie once or twice will have any difficulty in distinguishing her from other organists. At no time previously has it been so evident as in this collection of Duke Ellington tunes.

Most artists who attempt to play Ellington tunes make the grave error of trying to do so the same way they think Ellington would play them. As a result there are many tributes to him on records today minus any originality.

The music here is Ellington standards but the imaginative thoughts that are projected, belong to Scottie. She has masterfully accomplished this without distorting the basic Ellington mold. When you consider the fact that Shirley in her middle twenties has perhaps been hearing these tunes played by Ellington and others for a number of years and still renders

them as she has, without allowing the Ellington influence to overpower her, she can no longer be thought of as average. In as much as she is still a long way from her peak it is only natural to assume that Shirley has already moved out in front of her contemporaries.

Up to this point we have been speaking of Scottie the organist, now we would like to introduce you to another portion of her career, that of a jazz pianist.

Scottie, like most organists, began her career as a pianist. However when she joined Eddie she had already made the change over to organ and until her second LP (Scottie, Prestige 7155) she had not been recorded on piano. Those of you who have "Scottie" in your collection are aware of the warmth and creativeness she portrayed as a pianist. There is little doubt that if she so desired, she could make it all the way as a pianist, for she always plays piano in the same distinguished manner she shows on organ. However, for the sake of jazz lovers, we hope that she continues to concentrate on the organ.

The Selections

"Caravan" was first recorded by Duke in 1935. It was composed by trombonist Juan Tizol who was the featured soloist on the original recording. Duvivier and Edgibill prepare the way for Scottie's entrance of exotic sounds. Adventure into near eastern lands are unfolded upon what is certain to be one of the most forceful, yet delicate, journeys ever taken by organ through foreign lands.

"Just Squeeze Me" lists Ellington as the composer, but actually it was one of those tunes that nearly everyone in the band had a hand in. It was first recorded by Duke's trumpeter Rex Stewart under the title of "Subtle Sleigh" in 1941. Some five years later the present title was substituted and recorded by Ellington as a vocal for Ray Nance. Shirley opens on organ in the medium tempo, then moves to piano, while the organ continues with beautiful undertones. She closes with building tempos between organ and piano.

"C Jam Blues" is played here in fast tempo with Scottie engaging in unique riffs. Duvivier's pizzicato speaks with authority along the way. The tempo changes as we come to a 1938 composition by the Duke, "Prelude To A Kiss". Shirley creates an unforgettable mood filled with sensuous reveries on a very dramatic piano, so brilliant in tone that it gives the impression of being amplified. That she speaks fluently on piano is evidenced by her personal touch here.

"In A Sentimental Mood" composed by Ellington in 1935 is the opener for Side B. Here Scottie inserts all of the shades of blues into this lovely ballad; shades and strains of melodic inventions that could only originate from an organ when played by her, and her alone. The conversational effect she obtains here is an intrinsic part of her identity.

"In A Mellow Tone" is of 1940 vintage and has from its conception been synonymous with Johnny Hodges' alto. Most artists who play it are unable to avoid Hodges clichés that have been a part of its playing over the years. A less talented performer than Scottie, (especially on organ, because there are duplications of practically every musical instrument among its many keys) might have been persuaded to engage in a little "hodge podge" here, not Scottie. Opening on organ in a swinging vein she finally picks it up on a very earthy piano using a single line to enhance the melody. She ends on organ in front of some exceptional comping by Duvivier and Edgibill. We might add that the piano got in the last word, or note.

"I've It Bad" (And That Ain't Good) is taken from the ill-fated Ellington musical "Jump For Joy". Shirley has transformed it into a persuasive lament. She commences her revelations with soft but impressive statements. Another of her personal identifying patterns, a pizzicato effect, is in evidence here as it is elsewhere on this LP.

As all good things must come to an end, so it is with Shirley's playing of the Duke. Scottie has ended with the proper tune, "Just A-Sittin' And A-Rockin'" composed by Ellington and Billy Strayhorn in 1941. The organ speaks first then moves into the background as piano takes over. Shirley returns to organ to close what is sure to be considered by all who listen a very unusual and exceptionally brilliant session.

Ever since jazz began there has been at least one outstanding female artist that ranked along on equal terms with any man of her day, on her particular instrument. During the traditional period there was Lil Armstrong with King Oliver. The swing era brought us Mary Lou Williams, who remains until this day one of jazz' most accomplished pianists. Now in this modern period we have Shirley Scott. If the argument is that the gate lock drive then will someone explain to us what drive is, if it is not present on this date? "She plays well for a girl" would not apply to Scottie under any circumstances for she plays brilliantly, period.

Notes: BOB SNEAD
 Recording: RUDY VAN GELDER